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US drought woes deepen

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The drought in America's breadbasket has intensified to an unprecedented scale, experts warned yesterday, driving concern over food price rises if crops in the key producer are decimated.

The US Drought Monitor reported almost a threefold increase in areas of extreme drought over the past week in the nine Midwestern states where three quarters of the country's corn and soybean

crops are produced.

"That expansion of D3 or extreme conditions intensified quite rapidly and we went from 11.9 percent to 28.9 percent in just one week," Brian Fuchs, a climatologist and Drought Monitor author, told AFP.

"For myself studying drought, that's rapid. We've seen a lot of things developing with this drought that were unprecedented, especially the speed."

Continued on page 6

National Social Dialogue to decide on reduced tariffs for water & electricity

According to Aruba's Minister of Finance, our national Social Dialogue is something integral and crucial for the management of the government and is not an instrument to be used only when difficult decisions are to be made, but also for deciding on positive matters. It is in this context that the government has decided to go back to the Social Dialogue table to deliberate over the decision to reduce the water and electricity tariffs.

We want to govern this island in continuous dialogue with our social partners and we have committed ourselves to this, said Minister de Meza of Finance. He went on to say that, ... "there must be a consensus in the Social Dialogue because the decision will affect everyone, families, commerce and the economy of Aruba in general."

Minister de Meza reminisced about the past when WEB NV had proposed a 22% increase in the electricity tariff, the government stepped in and advised that that was too high and not responsible and would have a negative socio-economic effect on the island. While the government understood WEB's position to safe-



guard their financial obligations, yet they concluded that the proposed increase was not sustainable economically.

The government chose to discuss the matter in our Social Dialogue. There they discussed what would be bearable for the economy of the island and for the consumer. WEB, ELMAR and UTILITIES made a presentation during the Social Dialogue after which the Ministers Eman and de Meza sat down with the commercial partners and the Unions of the Social Dialogue and deliberated extensively on the matter.

The government then instructed the Board of Commissioners of Utilities for WEB

and ELMAR to prepare a business-economical analysis. And based on this it was decided to not implement the 22% increase.

Based on a number of favorable factors, among others, the Windmill park, price of crude internationally has dropped, the government did not collect dividends, WEB has had the opportunity to recover last year's losses, they informed the government that they can factor in a reduction on water and electricity tariffs. Although, ELMAR, reportedly, still has some recovering to do from their losses.

Continued on page 5

Minister Ing. Mike de Meza

"Ningun forza natural ta suficientemente fuerte pa kibra locual Dios a duna nos 235 aña pasa"

Minister ing. Mike de Meza ta felicita iglesia Catolico y muy en especial parokia Sta. Anna cu su celebracion di 235 aña di existencia sirbiendo e distrito di Noord y Aruba en general. Cu Dios sigui proteha y bendiciona parokia di Sta. Anna y drama su bendicion riba parokiano, sirbidor y pastornan.

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Supreme Audit Bureau received first annual Financial Statement!



Early this week, President of the Supreme Audit Bureau, Gabriel Werleman accompanied by members of the council, Frederick Nuboer, Jenny Croes and Maruschka Tromp, gladly received the first annual Financial Statement of Aruba from the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Upon receiving the document, Werleman stated, ... "I thank the government for submitting the 2011 Financial

Statement." He continued to assure the government that by August 31st the yearly 2011 Financial Statement and all others before it will be submitted to the Aruba Parliament. According to Werleman, by submitting the 2011 Financial Statement and all the others before it the Supreme Audit Bureau, Parliament and the government of Aruba will be, henceforth, completely up to date; and we must ensure that this remains this way.

Werleman explained that the bottomline of the budget is the annual Financial Statement. In his words, "...the community has the right to know exactly how tax monies they paid was used, and our job is to gauge this carefully."

He assured the government that they will do their job with due diligence and that in the future Aruba will continue to receive the yearly well-prepared Financial Statements.

Airport intersection to close on August 5th!



Delay in receiving construction material for the construction of the rotunda at the airport caused an abrupt change in the time line for the start of the project. Jossy Kock of the Public Works Department, in charge of the project, shared with the press that nonetheless the preparation work is continuing at the site and by the end of the first week in August they will definitely close the intersection in front of the airport.

Delay in the delivery of the asphalt to prepare the alternative roads also played a role in the decision to delay the work for a couple of weeks more. Everything is now in place and they are ready to proceed according to planning. The traffic lights at the airport intersection will be switched off on August 5th for all traffic.

Kock assured us that despite the short delay, this will not affect their original plan of the project. The original plan is to complete the construction of the rotunda in front of the airport by the end of November, for the latest by the beginning of December. DOW is committed to keeping this date. The work will be carried out by MNO Vervat Company.

Continued on page 5



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Police Force outfitted with brand new vehicles



On Tuesday afternoon twenty two sparkling new Toyota Prado and four Toyota Land Cruiser were turned over to the Aruba Police Force by the Garage Cordia Auto dealer in Camacuri. According to proprietor of the dealership, they took on the challenge to comply with all the requirements of the Police Force for these vehicles and can now look back at a tremendous job of coordination and meticulous preparation of each vehicle.

The Minister of Justice considers the acquisition of the 24 brand new vehicles an important achievement for the Police Force and the local

community, especially because each vehicle complies with international standards for police vehicles, and is what the Police Force needed and deserves.

With respect to the choice of vehicle, the Minister indicated that he was pleased that this was left to be decided upon by a commission who did the meticulous evaluation to determine which type of vehicle best complies with what the Force requires. Says Minister Dowers ... "our Police Force has vehicles that can get to practically any area on the island. They have a fleet of vehicles guaranteed

to function optimally for many years and that can guarantee that the police can get to where they need to be quickly and safely."

Garage Cordia proprietor, Hans Schnog, mentioned his satisfaction for the quick delivery of the vehicles by the TOYOTA company, and for the fact that they were able to work with local companies to complete the specifications for the vehicles. He thanked Pro-Mobile, Art & Design and Federal

Signal for their work. Schnog indicated that these vehicles are very safe and comfortable. With the lease contract, his company is responsible for the maintenance and regular service of the vehicles.

Chief of Police, Dolfi Richardson, congratulated the Aruban public first of all, then his force for such an excellent fleet of new vehicles, which he claims will definitely improve the quality of the work of the Police Force.

"These vehicles are another instrument to help our police to provide the service and security that our community deserves," according to Richardson.

He assured everyone that the Police Force will continue the good work they are doing, and thanked all those who worked on the selection and preparation of the vehicles and the Public Works department for their cooperation in the process.



Romar Trading and Johnnie Walker unveil the Diamond Jubilee Commemorative



Diageo SM Venture Markets John Curry

A glittering VIP event defined by "island chic" was conducted at Aruba's Archeological Museum on Wednesday evening, July 25, to unveil one of the sixty Diamond Jubilee commemorative issues produced by the famous John Walker & Sons distillery, which was purchased by Romar Trading of Aruba.

Johnnie Walker Global Brand Manager Tom Jones was on island to explain the exquisite craftsmanship that went into every aspect of this



Global Brand Ambassador Tom Jones with Blue Label

Beveridge and Apprentice Blender Matthew Crow to create a select blended whisky from exceptional casks of grain and malt whiskies distilled in 1952, the year of HRM Queen Elizabeth's coronation. Over sixty artisans were involved in the final presentation, including the company's Master Cooper David Taylor, who created two small marrying casks of a rare oak, which allowed the flavors to combine gradually and be closely monitored, before this special whiskey was bottled on February 6, 2012, 60 years to the day after The



special issue in honor of the 60th anniversary celebration of the reign of HRM Queen Elizabeth II. This is the second time in the history of England's monarchy they are celebrating a diamond jubilee, the first having been for Queen Victoria in 1897.

To mark this grand occasion, John Walker & Sons charged Master Blender Jim

Queen ascended to the throne.

The Diamond Jubilee issue comes encased in a hand-crafted wooden cabinet by N.E.J. Stevenson, incorporating oak and native Caledonian pine from The Queen's Sandringham and Balmoral Estates and decorated with fine marquetry, using timber veneers from around the Com-



Antoni Gario, Ingrid Does and Minister de Meza



The faceted decanter

monwealth.

The crystal decanters were created by Baccarat, a company known for over 200 years as the ultimate in luxury crystal. It is diamond shaped and faceted to produce the same scintilla as a rare quality gem and stands on a base of six radial legs to reflect each decade of The Queen's enduring reign.

The silver adornments to this work of art were also hand-crafted by Scottish silversmiths Hamilton & Inches, including the John Walker & Sons Royal Warrant, for Britannia. They also crafted the decanter's collar inlaid with a half carat diamond of fine quality, and the silver key for the cabinet. Each decanter is accompanied by a pair of specially designed lead crystal glasses by Cumbria Crystal, each hand-engraved by artist



Milton Harms CEO of Romar Trading

Philip Lawson Johnston with wildlife scenes from The Queen's Sandringham and Balmoral Estates.

All of the English artisans contributing to this commemorative vintage, like John Walker & Sons, have been awarded the title of Royal Warrant Holders by the monarchy, a badge of honor and consistent excellence. John Walker & Sons received theirs from King George V in 1934.

QEST Scholar Laura West will created a hand-bound artefact book, which will be personalized with the name of each buyer by QEST Scholar and Calligrapher Sally Mangum. She deploys specially preserved inks and nibs used by royal scholars from over 200 years past. The book tells the story of craftsmanship behind Diamond Jubilee by John Walker & Sons and all the craftsmen who had a role in its creation and completion.

The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST) is the charitable arm of the Royal

Warrant Holders Association, established in 1990 to mark its 150th anniversary and the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. QEST provides scholarships to preserve rare skills and enable talented craftsmen and women who have demonstrated promise and passion for their craft to achieve greater levels of expertise through study with masters from around the world. This limited edition is being sold to raise funds for the QEST Diamond Jubilee



A toast to Queen Elizabeth

Appeal for £100,000 each; John Walker & Sons has guaranteed £100,000,000 from the sales to QEST.

This most historic and elegant VIP event for Aruba welcomed island elite and dignitaries, culminating in the unveiling of the Diamond Jubilee issue by Romar Trading CEO Milton Harms and John Curry, Sales Manager of Venture Markets for Diageo, the worldwide distributors of Johnnie Walker blended whiskies. Glasses of top of the line Johnnie Walker Blue were distributed to the audience for a final toast to Queen Elizabeth and the continuance of attention to excellence in all things, from premium liquors to the fine craftsmanship involved in this memorial issue.



The decanter sparkles like a diamond

by Rosalie Klein

National Social Dialogue . .

Continued from page 1

The government, the primary shareholder of both utility companies and the one responsible for the management of the economy of the island and the tariffs in general; has therefore informed WEB that they have scheduled a Social Dialogue to discuss and reach a consensus on the matter. The Social Dialogue will determine what structure to use for the decrease in the water and electricity tariffs for the future going forward.

Both WEB and ELMAR

have presented different options to the government and they will do presentations for the Social Dialogue. In the final analysis the Social Dialogue will be expected to reach a consensus on how this will all factor out. It is believed that the reduction in the tariffs will be around 20% and providing there is no dramatic change in the international market, should be maintained for many years, according to the government.

Airport intersection to close ...

Continued from page 2

Alternative Routes:

The alternative route from San Nicolaas to Playa will be from where there is now a temporary small rotunda. Get on this rotunda and continue to follow the road to the airport, go down and then get back on the main highway. The traffic coming from San Nicolaas wanting to go to Santa Cruz should also get on the rotunda, then turn right to enter Wayaca and follow on down to Cumana.

Traffic coming from Cumana heading towards the airport will pass by Arubus and go up, then turn right to reach

the rotunda where they can choose to either go to Santa Cruz, San Nicolaas, or to the

Traffic coming from Oranjestad will be deviated near the Fire Station driving on the alternative road running parallel with the airport gate up to the small rotunda. There they can turn right to go to San Nicolaas or continue on to go to Wayaca. The Public Works Department will make sure that there will be signs everywhere to direct motorists how to travel. These signs will be illuminated for perfect vision both day and night.





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Sat. July 28: Artist Luis Salazar invites kids to come and paint at Wilhelmina Park, during the public art expo Giants in the City

The Prome Encuentro Bienal Arte Contemporaneo di Caribe (1st Biennale Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Encounter) Foundation invites Aruba to experience the teacher's side of invited artist in the parallel program Luis Salazar. This activity is part of the educative program of the Prome Encuentro Bienal.

Luis Salazar is one of the artists of the Foundation INSIGHT for the arts Aruba, and his artistic labor includes a series of events where children can be part of his work and finalizes in his grand expo, planned for August 17.

Children between the ages of 7 – 12 are invited this Saturday at the Wilhelminapark to come and enjoy a creative,



interactive and artistic experience in an unconventional space, surrounded by Giants on the Island.

For more information contact Cede Bienal at 297-5886868 or via email: info@encuentroartaruba.org.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US drought woes deepen

Continued from page 1

Almost two-thirds of the continental United States is now suffering drought conditions, the largest area recorded since the Drought Monitor project started in 1999.

"If you are following the grain prices here in the US, they are reflecting the anticipated shortages with a price increase," Fuchs said.

"In turn you're going to see those price increases trickle into the other areas that use those grain crops: cattle feed, ethanol production and then food stuffs."

In some rural areas, municipal water suppliers are talking about mandatory restrictions because they have seen such a dramatic drop in the water table that they fear being unable to fulfill deliveries to customers, Fuchs said.

"Things have really developed over the last two months and conditions have worsened just that quick and that is really unprecedented," he said.

"Definitely exports are going to suffer because there is going to be less available and the markets are already reflecting that."

"It's anticipated that this



drought is going to persist through the next couple of months at least and conditions are not overly favorable to see any widespread improvement," he added.

President Barack Obama's administration has opened up protected US land to help farmers and ranchers hit by the drought and encouraged crop insurance companies to forgo charging interest for a month.

Officials have said the drought will drive up food prices since 78 percent of US corn and 11 percent of soybean crops have been hit and the United States is the world's biggest producer of those crops.

The current drought has been compared to a 1988 crisis that cut production by 20 percent and cost the economy tens of billions of dollars.

US, 5 others strike pact against tax evasion

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States and five European countries announced yesterday an agreement to fight offshore tax evasion through automatic information exchanges.

"This is an important step forward in establishing a common approach to combat tax evasion based on automatic exchange of information," the US, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain said in a joint statement.

The partners said they agreed on implementation of a 2010 US law on reporting information and withholding tax provisions.

The so-called "model agreement" supplements the US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) targeting non-compliance by US taxpayers using foreign accounts.

Their agreement sets a framework for reporting certain financial account information to tax authorities, followed by automatic exchange of the information under existing bilateral tax treaties or related agreements.

"We look forward to quickly concluding bilateral agreements based on today's model," the six countries said in a joint statement.

The US FATC law has been controversial in many countries because it requires banks to reveal information about their clients.

Until now, tax agreements have only provided for the exchange of information "on demand," meaning a country would already suspect possible tax evasion before requesting the information.

"Today's announcement is an important milestone in our

joint efforts to combat offshore tax evasion and make our tax systems more efficient and fair," Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said in a separate statement.

In late June, the United States announced progress in talks toward striking a tax deal with Switzerland, as well as another with economic partner Japan.

In particular, Switzerland and the United States have butted heads over the rules.

The wealth are hiding at least \$21 trillion in accounts outside their home country, according to a study released this week by activist group the Tax Justice Network.

Two senior US Democratic senators, Dick Durbin and Carl Levin, say tax-haven abuse costs US taxpayers an estimated \$100 billion a year in lost revenue.



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Disabled children suffering the effects of the 1984 Bhopal disaster in India take part in a "Special Olympics" to protest against London 2012 sponsor Dow Chemical. The event is aimed at raising awareness about the legacy of birth defects and pollution from the accident at a factory owned by US chemical company Union Carbide, which was bought by Dow in 1999, organisers said. (AFP PHOTO)



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Clashes rage in Aleppo, 114 killed across Syria

ALEPPO (AFP) - Fighting raged in Syria's second city Aleppo yesterday afternoon, a watchdog said, as regime forces shelled a village in Damascus province, killing five children.

A security source told AFP troops were preparing to launch an all-out offensive on rebel-held districts of Aleppo.

Intermittent clashes were reported in the Damascus district of Al-Hajar Al-Aswad, with the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights watchdog saying at least seven people were killed there.

Regime forces pounded the southern Salaheddin and eastern Jazamati districts of Aleppo, the country's commercial hub, the Observatory said.

Across Syria, at least 114 people were killed yesterday, including 61 civilians, 32 regime troops and 21 rebels, according to the group.

Regime forces shelled the village of Yalda, just south of the capital Damascus, killing 16 civilians, among them five children and four women, the Observatory said.

"The villagers are terrified," the Syrian Revolution General Commission said in a statement, adding that "there are difficulties helping the wounded. Some houses collapsed with people still inside them."

The violence came as rebels and troops prepared for a major battle in Aleppo.

"The special forces were deployed on Wednesday and Thursday on the edges of the city, and more troops have arrived to take part in a gene-

ralised counter-offensive today or tomorrow," a security source said.

Rebels also said a regime assault appeared imminent.

"We expect a major offensive at any time, specifically on areas across the southern belt, from east to west," Colonel Abdel Jabbar al-Okaidi, a spokesman for the rebel Free Syrian Army in Aleppo, told AFP via Skype.

Syrian newspaper Al-Watan, which is close to the regime, led yesterday with the headline "Aleppo, the mother of all battles."

For five hours on Wednesday night, without let-up, government forces bombarded the southwestern quarter of Salaheddin, which is almost entirely under rebel control, an AFP correspondent witnessed.

The rebels admitted to the correspondent that they are no march for the military and many share the certainty they will die in the expected assault.

In the meantime they prepared to confront the troops, filling sandbags to erect barricades and moving a bus into position to block a street. Some also belt out slogans to give themselves courage.

In southern Damascus, street battles were also fought yesterday morning in the Yarmuk Palestinian refugee camp, the Observatory said.

Elsewhere in the city, an activist in the southern neighbourhood of Tadamun, who gave his name as Abu Qais al-Shami, said several districts in the southern part of the city were under assault yesterday by regime forces.

Cuba offers meeting with longtime foe US

HAVANA (AFP) - Cuba's communist regime yesterday marked 59 years since the launch of the revolt that led them to power, using the occasion to offer a meeting with longtime foe, the United States.

President Raul Castro, in his impromptu remarks at the close of the celebrations, also denounced opposition groups he compared to Libyan and Syrian rebels in the "Arab Spring."

However, the president

made no mention of the controversial death on Sunday of one of the island's most famous dissidents, Oswaldo Paya.

Washington has demanded a "full and transparent investigation" of Paya's death, which Cuban authorities say was a car accident. It has also denounced "the climate of repression in Cuba," saying the communist government needs to do better at respecting international human rights, including free speech.

In his remarks yesterday, Castro offered to meet with US leaders to discuss any issues they have with his government or country.

"Any day they (Americans) want it, we will sit with them at a negotiating table," the Cuban president proclaimed, clad in military dress.

But he insisted the conversation would go both ways: "Equal to equal, we will also discuss subjects concerning the United States."

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Health & Living

Younger American males venturing into salons: study



CHICAGO (AFP) - Men still make up a small portion of salon customers in the United States, but their numbers are growing, especially in the 18-34 age group, a global market research group said.

In a report aimed at the salon industry, Mintel said Tuesday that 52 percent of the men it surveyed had gone to salons, which it broadly defined as anything from a luxury spa to a corner barber shop.

Fifty-eight percent said they'd gone for a mere haircut. But among males aged 18-34, 25 percent said they had gone for a manicure or pedicure,

and 20 percent had treated themselves to a facial.

"The men's market is growing, although it's (still) a small portion" of the overall market for beauty health and services, said Amy Ziegler, global personal care analyst at Mintel in Chicago.

She attributed the trend in part to a growing number of male-specific salons -- often promoted through social media -- "that are not so scary, and less intimidating" than traditional, female-oriented establishments.

"The men who are engaged (with going to salons) are very engaged. You can call them

your 'metrosexual' men who are very concerned with their appearance," Ziegler added.

"But I think there's still that portion of men who may not have been interested, but who are hearing about them, and who are willing to try... and then think, 'This isn't so bad' - and they're going back."

Mintel, which interviewed about 2,000 men and women for its report, also found the market for grooming and beauty services growing at a higher rate among Hispanics, blacks and Asians of both genders.

Blacks are especially keen on nail care, while Hispanics and, to a lesser extent, Asians are more interested in facials and massages, Ziegler said.

Coming out of the recession, Ziegler said, there is a "shift away from DIY," with American consumers returning to salons for such treatments as hair coloring that they had opted to do at home to save money.

Health Tip:

Help Kids Have an Active Summer

-- It's summertime, and the living is easy for kids out of school. But parents should help their children stay active while the weather is hot.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics suggests how kids can enjoy a healthy summer vacation:

- Encourage kids to visit with friends in person, instead of chatting with them on the phone.
- Shut down the computer and video games, and have the kids go outside for a game of tennis, a hike or rollerblading.
- Enroll the kids in a community sports league or sign them up to run or walk in a 5k.
- Volunteer the kids for a summer camp, clean-up effort, community garden or project to build homes.
- Have the kids babysit and take their charges for bike rides or to the park.

All eyes on new writing device for the disabled

PARIS (AFP) - A French researcher has built a device allowing disabled people to write or draw on a computer screen using only their eyes, a report said Thursday.

With head-mounted cameras monitoring their eye movements, test subjects were able to write and draw on a blank computer screen in the latest breakthrough for people trapped in immobility by disease or accident.

"For persons deprived of limb movement, this offers a fast, creative and personal means of linguistic and emotional expression," said the re-

port by Jean Lorenceau of France's CNRS research institute.

Lorenceau's system, still just a prototype, compensates for saccadic, or jumpy, eye movements to allow a smooth writing style.

After four half-hour training sessions, his subjects were able to write at a rate of about 25 letters per minute.

Similar systems exist, but none that allow a person to trace their own letters with this level of precision.

In July, engineers said they had built a device using mass-produced video gaming equip-

ment that lets disabled people control a computer cursor with just their eyes -- with a price tag of under \$30 (25 euros).

Other technologies require electrode implants in the brain, an expensive procedure.

Such technology offers hope for restoring some level of independence to people suffering from multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy and spinal cord injuries or amputees.

In the EU alone, there were more than 16 million people with disabilities who would benefit from such a system, an earlier study had found.

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Sci-Tech

Twitter hit by new mystery outage



NEW YORK (AFP) - Twitter went down for around 30 minutes on Thursday, leaving millions of users without updates from friends, celebrities and news providers a day ahead of the opening of the Summer Olympics.

Twitter accounts accessed by AFP from its Washington office showed no or patchy updates from around 1600 GMT, but the service was gradually restored, with many users posting messages expressing relief.

And many took to Twitter after it was restored to joke about the outage.

"Wow. Wasn't sure I'd survive that @twitter outage. I even took to Facebook. Desperate times call for desperate measures. Thankful it's back," Michael Schlact tweeted.

"Took time during the Twitter outage to explore some self-improvement," Jason Carlin tweeted. "I've written two novels, learned Esperanto, and knitted a sweater."

Last month the service was taken down for several hours by what the company described as a "cascading bug," but the cause of Thursday's

problem was not immediately clear.

In its early days, Twitter was notoriously unstable and would display a picture known as the "fail whale" on its home page when it experienced one of its frequent outages.

The service has become more reliable over the past couple of years, however, and

Apple pitches gadget security to hacker crowd

(AFP) - Apple pitched security measures in its mobile gadgets on Thursday during its first presentation at a premier gathering of hackers and those intent on thwarting cyber attacks.

The unprecedented talk by Apple head of software platform security Dallas De Atley at the 15th annual Black Hat conference in Las Vegas came as hackers increasingly target smartphones at the heart of Internet Age lifestyles.

"When we were developing the iPhone we realized there were aspects that make it different from computers,"

down time is now infrequent.

At the Olympics, athletes are expected to share their Twitter handles, and tweet their experiences using the site.

Twitter, which allows its members to post brief comments, links or pictures, claims to have more than 140 million active users, with the largest number being in the United States.

A recent survey found one in seven Americans who go online use Twitter and eight percent do so every day.

"Security is architecture; you have to build it in from the very beginning," De Atley said to a packed Caesars Palace ballroom.

De Atley spent an hour providing insights into encryption, software keys and other security features built into the iOS operating system for iPhones, iPads and iPod touch devices.

Hacking attacks on mobile devices, especially Apple gadgets or those powered by Google-backed Android software, were hot topics at Black Hat, where developers voiced doubt that device makers are devoted to security.

Unlike other speakers at the weeklong gathering, De Atley did not field questions from the audience. Instead, he brushed aside queries as he was ushered quickly out a side door after his talk.

French archaeologists unearth pharaoh boat



CAIRO (AFP) French archaeologists have discovered a roughly 5,000-year-old pharaonic solar boat in an expedition in Abu Rawash, west

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This file photo shows storm clouds gathering over Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong. More than 100 people were injured and trees were ripped from the ground on July 24 as typhoon Vicente lashed Hong Kong, packing winds in excess of 140 kilometres (87 miles) an hour, according to officials.

AFP/PHOTO



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of the Egyptian capital, the antiquities ministry said on Wednesday.

The antiquities minister, Mohammed Ibrahim, said the

boat was up to 5,000 years old. "It goes back to the era of Pharaoh Den, one of the First Dynasty kings," he said in a statement.

The six-metre (19.6 feet) long and 1.5-metre wide boat "is in good condition," he added. Its planks are now undergoing renovation before it is put on display in a museum.

The pharaohs believed that solar boats, buried close to them at death, would transport them in the afterlife.

In 1954 an Egyptian archaeologist discovered what may be the Pharaoh Khufu's 43-metre solar ship, made of cedar, in a Giza pyramid. The 4,500 year-old intact vessel is on display near the pyramid.

COMICS



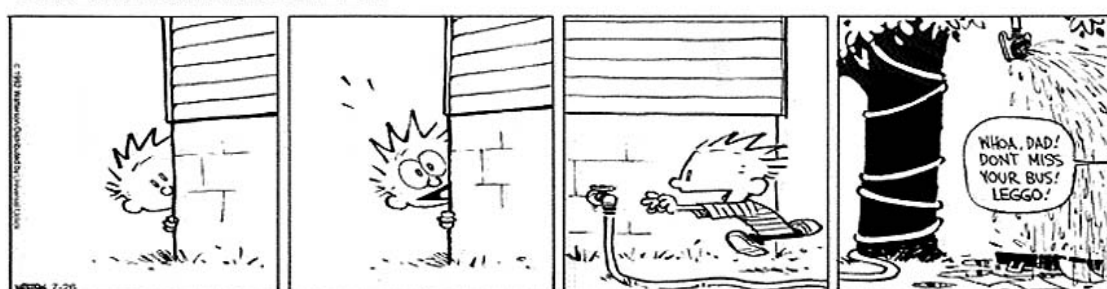
PICKLES



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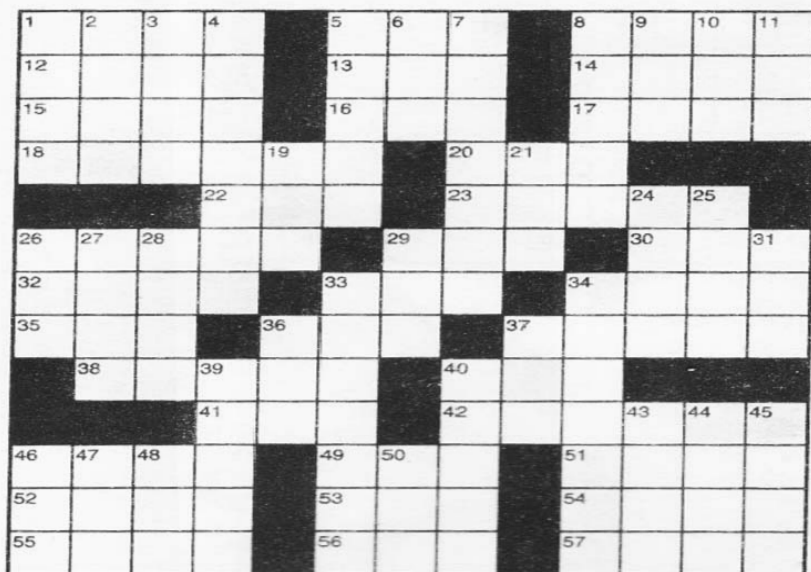
ACROSS

1. Liberal ____
5. Sleep stage (abbr.)
8. Bound
12. Pirate's booty
13. ____ Claire, Wisconsin
14. Hep
15. Sullen
16. Monopoly's four (abbr.)
17. Peruse
18. Egypt's continent
20. Actor Ziering
22. Maria ____ Trapp
23. Atkins and Huntley
26. Foundations
29. Pas' mates
30. Bear ____
32. Functions
33. Gdansk's locale (abbr.)
34. A few
35. Soccer's Hamm
36. Fabray, to friends
37. Ohio tire city
38. Natural aptitude
40. Actress Smart or Adams
41. Co. abbr.
42. In abundance
46. Brief swims
49. Clean air gp.
51. Highest point
52. Perfume bottle
53. Luau wreath
54. Agitate
55. Enjoy a meal
56. Evil act

DOWN

1. "M*A*S*H" star
2. Chimney's locale
3. Journey
4. Tries hard
5. Aired anew
6. Listening requirement
7. Broadway offering
8. Greene of "Bonanza"
9. WSW's opp.
10. ____ loss for words (2 wds.)
11. Pea protector
19. Businesses (abbr.)
21. Sounds of delight
24. Norse thunder god
25. Form of wrestling
26. Derelict
27. Like (2 wds.)
28. Notary's stamp
29. Calendar abbr.
31. Patton's rank (abbr.)
33. Packages
34. Hoagy Carmichael-Johnny

36. Author Anaïs ____
37. Med. group
39. Movie theater path
40. "Encore!"
43. Andy Taylor's boy
44. Count (on)
45. Mimi and Nicole, to Tom Cruise
46. ____ player (VCR's successor)
47. Clock numeral
50. Architect I.M. ____



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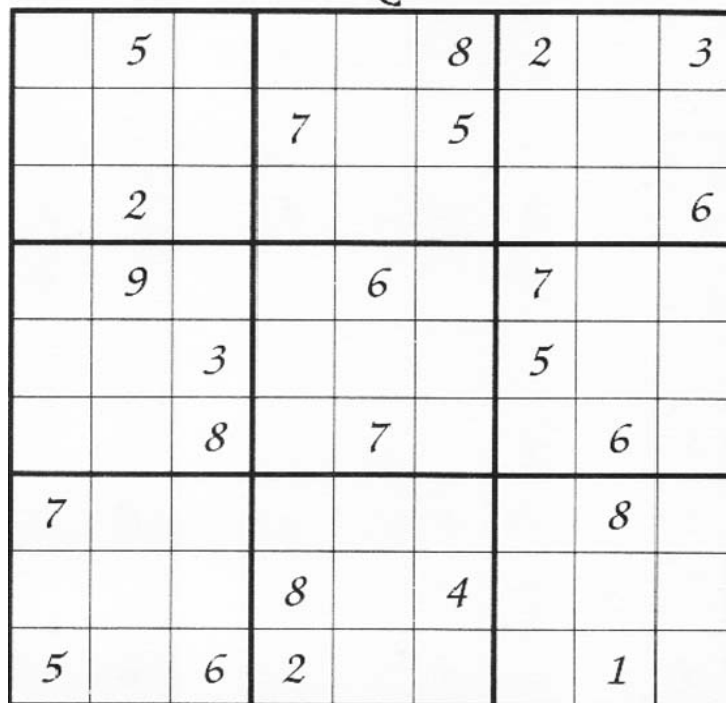
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

6	1	7	2	5	8	9	3	4
2	9	4	5	8	6	3	1	7
5	8	3	9	6	1	2	7	4
2	9	6	5	8	3	1	7	4
1	7	5	2	8	6	3	4	9
8	3	1	9	7	5	6	2	4
9	5	1	6	7	4	2	8	3
7	6	8	3	2	1	9	4	5
4	2	8	1	9	7	5	6	3

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9

A number is Never repeated in a row or column.

In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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FINANCE

ExxonMobil's Q2 profit soars on one-time gain

NEW YORK (AFP) - US energy giant ExxonMobil posted strong profit gains for the second quarter yesterday, boosted by a one-time gain and drops in capital and exploration spending and divestments.

Net income was \$15.9 billion in the April-June period, an increase of 48.6 percent from a year ago, lifted by \$7.5 billion in gains related to divestments and tax-related items, including the reduction of its stake in Japanese firm TonenGeneral Sekiyu.

Exxon Mobil Corporation

reported earnings of \$3.41 per share, up 56 percent from the second quarter of 2011.

Excluding the one-time gains, EPS was roughly \$1.80, well below Wall Street's \$1.95 estimate.

Total revenues rose 1.5 percent, to \$127.4 billion, widely topping expectations of \$115.1 billion.

Oil-equivalent production fell 5.6 percent; excluding certain impacts, production was essentially flat, the oil and natural gas giant said.

Geithner unaware of US banks' role in Libor fixing

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said yesterday he did not know whether three major US banks were involved in the manipulation of a key benchmark borrowing rate.

Answering Senate Banking Committee questions about Bank of America, Citibank and JP Morgan Chase's possible roles in the global Libor fixing scandal, Geithner referred lawmakers to investigators.

Asked whether he was aware of possible wrongdoing, Geithner said: "We don't know that. But I think that is a question you need to refer to the enforcement agencies."

"But I think that you are going to find, because this is

still a confidential investigation they won't be in a position to answer that question until the remaining investigation is brought to its natural conclusion."

The three banks are on the panel that sets the US dollar interbank lending rate -- which is the benchmark for a range of consumer products and is thought to have been widely abused.

Already Barclays has been fined \$452 million by US and British regulators for its role in the scandal.

The US Securities and Exchange Commission and the US Department of Justice are said to be investigating.

HSBC Mexico pays \$27.5 mn fine over laundering probe

LONDON (AFP) - British bank HSBC said yesterday its Mexico unit had paid a fine totalling 379 million Mexican pesos (\$27.5 million) to Mexico's banking regulator for breaching anti-money laundering controls.

"Grupo Financiero HSBC, S.A. de C.V. (HSBC Mexico) paid a fine imposed by the National Banking and Securities Commission, amounting to MXN379m in connection with non-compliance with anti-money laundering systems and controls," said a statement.

"The infringements related to the late reporting of 1,729 unusual transactions, the failure to report 39 unusual transactions, and 21 administrative failures," HSBC said.

HSBC earlier this month apologised and a senior executive resigned after US lawmakers accused Europe's biggest bank of giving Iran,

terrorists and drug dealers access to America's financial system.

In a 330-page report, the US Senate found the lender allowed affiliates in countries such as Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh to move billions of dollars in suspect funds into the United States without adequate controls.

The report said HSBC's Mexican affiliate "transported \$7.0 billion in physical US dollars to (HSBC's US arm) HBUS from 2007 to 2008... raising red flags that the volume of dollars included proceeds from illegal drug sales in the United States."

Moody's lowers outlook for 17 German banks

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Moody's on Wednesday downgraded the outlook for 17 German banks after a similar move against the government's credit rating earlier this week.

Moody's cut the outlook on a swathe of state-backed regional banks, known in Germany as landesbank, but also included IKB Deutsche Industriebank and Deutsche Postbank.

Many of the landesbank have struggled since the 2008 financial crisis and amid Europe's ongoing economic crisis, which has seen growth slow.

Moody's noted that several of the banks held debt that was guaranteed by the German central or regional governments.

It warned more downgrades could come if there was a "further deterioration of the creditworthiness" of the Germany's central or regional governments.

On Monday, Moody's cut Germany's ratings outlook from "stable" to "negative," citing exposure to European financial woes and the possible cost of more bailouts.

That was the first step toward stripping Germany of its coveted AAA credit rating, a stark warning that no one, not even Europe's largest economy, is immune from the eurozone's rolling crisis.

ECB chief vows total support for euro, markets surge

LONDON (AFP) - European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi vowed unconditional support for the beleaguered euro yesterday, sending markets soaring orbit as traders eyed further action from the bank to shore up the eurozone.

In apparently unscripted comments in London, the normally reserved Draghi said his institution was "ready to do whatever it takes to preserve the euro. And believe me it will be enough".

Stressing that the euro was "irreversible", Draghi said that part of his bank's remit was to keep sovereign debt levels under control when they hampered the proper functioning of interest rate policy.

Analysts saw Draghi's comment as a hint the ECB could soon reintroduce its hotly contested program of buying up the bonds of struggling eurozone countries that has lain dormant for several months.

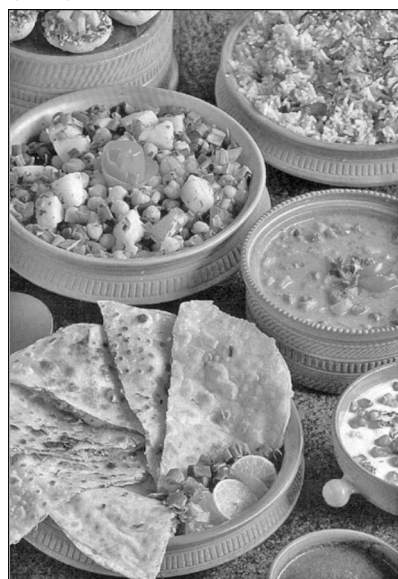
As Spanish borrowing costs

soared over seven percent earlier this week -- the level that forced Ireland, Portugal and Greece into bailouts -- the bank has come under increasing pressure to restart the program.

And Draghi's hints had an immediate impact on borrowing costs, with Spain's shooting below the seven-percent mark and Italian costs plummeting to just above six percent.

The comments also sent stock markets into euphoric mood and boosted the euro on the foreign exchange markets after several days of painful declines amid fresh speculation the eurozone might implode or Spain might need a bailout.

ABN Amro economist Nick Kounis said that Draghi had "opened the door for a restart of the central bank's government bond purchase program," untapped since February.



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U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80	
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20	
Canada	CAD	1.75	1.77	1.79	
Britain	GBP	2.72	2.77	2.83	
Switzerland	CHF	181.61	182.33	183.13	
Netherlands	EUR	216.38	218.36	220.55	
Sweden	SEK	24.85	25.57	26.37	
Denmark	DKK	28.38	29.10	29.90	
Norway	NOK	28.54	29.26	30.06	
Japan	JPY	225.89	227.95	230.24	
(per 100)		All rates for amounts up to AWG 100.00 per item.			

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NEW YORK (AFP) - A US judge said Thursday he will rule later in the year on whether to dismiss charges Canadian actress Genevieve Sabourin stalked Hollywood star Alec Baldwin. Lawyers for Sabourin, whom Baldwin accuses of sending love struck emails and coming uninvited to his Manhattan apartment, asked the New York criminal court to toss the case "on constitutional grounds," among others. Judge Mark White set a September 19 hearing for his ruling on the defense motion. Sabourin, 40, was arrested on April 8 following a complaint by Baldwin, who said she was harassing him with emails, asking him to marry her, and turning up at his Greenwich Village apartment in Manhattan.

Katherine Jackson back home with grandchildren



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Katherine Jackson returned home to her grandchildren Thursday after a family battle led a US judge to transfer the guardianship of late singer Michael Jackson's three children to his nephew TJ.

Jackson's 14-year-old daughter Paris -- who had been broadcasting her fears about her grandmother's whereabouts on Twitter for days -- tweeted "grandma's here! #thankyougod" early Thursday morning.

Katherine Jackson, the late singer's mother, was granted custody of Paris, Prince Michael, 15, and Blanket, 10 after their father's death.

Judge Mitchell Beckloff suspended that arrangement on Wednesday because she had left the family home in Los Angeles.

She vowed later Wednesday to fight to regain legal guardianship of the children.

"I am devastated that while I've been away, my grandchildren have been taken away from me, and I'm coming home to see about that," Katherine Jackson said in an interview with ABC News.

The fractious family has been embroiled in legal and financial disputes since the pop

star's sudden death in June 2009 from an overdose of Propofol, a powerful anesthetic.

Entertainment media portrayed the 82-year-old Jackson family matriarch's absence as an abduction by Michael's siblings, who are allegedly furious they did not inherit any of the singer's assets.

Paris fueled the speculation with a series of tweets in which she insisted her grandmother was "missing" and wrote "something is really off, this isn't like her at all... I wanna talk directly to my grandmother."

But Katherine Jackson insisted she was visiting a spa in Arizona to rest and that rumors of a kidnapping were false, telling ABC News "My children would never do anything to me like that."

Prince Michael was not convinced.

"As long as I can remember my dad had repeatedly warned me of certain people and their ways," he wrote in a lengthy tweet. "Although I am happy my grandma was returned, after speaking with her I realized how misguided and how badly she was lied to. I'm really angry and hurt."

Argentina remembers Eva Peron 60 years after her death



BUENOS AIRES (AFP) - Argentines, including President Cristina Kirchner, pay tribute to Eva Peron Thursday on the 60th anniversary of the national icon's premature death.

Kirchner was to eulogize Evita, whose death from cancer at the age of 33 shocked the nation, at a ceremony expected to draw 60,000 people 40 kilometers (25 miles) northeast of here.

To mark the occasion, a new 100 peso bill -- equivalent to about 22 US dollars -- was unveiled Wednesday imprinted with the image of Eva Peron.

The banknote shows the late first lady in profile, her blond hair swept back into the classic chignon hairstyle she usually wore.

Kirchner called it a fitting tribute, noting it marked "the first time in 200 years that a woman appears on a (national) bill".

Another commemoration was scheduled to take place at La Recoleta cemetery, where Maria Eva Duarte de Peron, the glamorous second wife of president Juan Peron, is buried

in an exclusive Buenos Aires district.

And a mural depicting Evita painted in a hospital bearing her name will be inaugurated by the governor of Buenos Aires province, Daniel Scioli.

There will also be a musical tribute on the stairs of the Argentine Congress, with the participation of baritone Ernesto Bauer and soprano Eugenia Fuente along with a school orchestra of 60 youths.

At 2325 GMT, the precise moment when Evita died, the

national anthem will be sung outside Congress.

The movement is to mark the anniversary in the central city of Cordoba.

With the slogan "As banner to victory", Buenos Aires meanwhile called for a meeting in the National Library in front of the Evita Monument.

The General Confederation of Labor was also holding its own commemoration at its headquarters.

"We take your (Evita's) name as a banner against social injustice and exclusion," said one of the many union slogans published in Thursday's newspapers.

Over 30,000 copies of Pigna's biography "Jirones de su Vida" (Bits of Her Life), about Evita's ascent from street to chic and power, have sold in less than a month.

And she is also being remembered with the reissuing of novels and biographies as well as with exhibitions of photographs and memorabilia.

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Adorable and affordable; 5 Burgers Aruba offers an island twist to the great American Burger

Expatriates from Boston, Massachusetts, residing on Aruba, Aaron and Rosie Walisever are living their dream: a home on paradise while welcoming all and sundry to their proud undertaking, 5 Burgers Aruba. Some may be quite well acquainted with a nationally known U.S. franchise bearing the name "5", and patrons can expect the same great quality between the buns, but an expanded menu and Rosie and Aaron's fanatical dedication to giving their customers what they really want has resulted in a unique menu.



Rosie and Aaron love their Burger too



Gouda Burger 2

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression," comments Aaron; and upon entering 5 Burgers Aruba in The Village Mall in Palm Beach, one is struck by utterly spotless surroundings and a smiling, friendly, attentive service crew. Of course, the main item on the menu is burgers-the way they were meant to be, thick and juicy, made fresh daily and 100% pure beef, the kind that made the hamburger a traditional American treat.

Prices vary only slightly between regular and small (basically 2 patties or 1) with specialty items such as Gouda Burger, Farmer's Burger, Man Burger (almost 12 ounces of choice beef), and a Western Burger with crispy onion rings and BBQ sauce. All of these can be personalized with an incredible array of toppings, (mushrooms, jalapeño peppers, bacon, cheese, lettuce, tomato... whatever the list goes on) at absolutely no extra cost.

5 Burger portions are ENORMOUS! Aaron suggests that even their small serving of fries, which are made from hand-cut fresh

Idaho potatoes, is enough to be shared by two. He was very amused to watch a famous French chef demonstrating the best way to make fried potatoes on a gourmet cooking show and could only comment "He stole my recipe!" Try them the English way-with vinegar, and you'll wonder how you ever ate fries without it. This same 5-star chef also swears by Gouda as the best topping for the ideal gourmet cheeseburger.

If you are a fan of crispy friend onion rings, as we are at THE MORNING NEWS, you cannot leave there without trying their secret recipe batter-dipped gourmet rings, made from fresh, not frozen onions. Unquestionably, the best we have had anywhere, and for those that like a little spice, the fried jalapeños are a real treat. Aaron and Rosie have expanded their menu to accommodate certain tastes and dietary needs; they offer a tasty grilled chicken sandwich as well.

5 Burgers Aruba is open for lunch & dinner - daily hours are Noon to 10-ish; delivery is available to both the high-rise and low-rise hotel and beach district for orders over \$50. Enjoy a great lunch without ever leaving the beach by calling 586-3904. However, we suggest you stop by and enjoy their authentic, heartfelt hospitality; it is not unusual for the owners when things are not too busy, to sit and chat while sharing their knowledge of the island. Totally yummy and fun plus a great deal for a quality burger, they are definitely worth a visit

Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up

and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples.

high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange



Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV,

rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.





Summer Olympics: July 27 - August 12



No hangover from Wimbledon woe, says Djokovic



Most of Djokovic's training emphasized fitness and a proper tennis diet.

LONDON (AFP) - Novak Djokovic has warned Roger Federer there is no chance he will suffer an Olympic hangover despite losing his Wimbledon title and world number one ranking to the Swiss great.

Djokovic was forced to surrender his Wimbledon crown earlier this month as Federer defeated the Serb in the semi-finals and went on to knock him off the top of the world rankings by winning the title for a record-equalling seventh time.

The 25-year-old is seeded

to meet Federer in the final of the Olympic tennis event, which is being held at the All England Club from Saturday, and the world number two is desperate to make amends for his Wimbledon exit.

After a remarkable 2011, when he recorded one of the greatest individual seasons in tennis history and a dominant start to 2012, Djokovic has come up short in the last two Grand Slams, losing to Rafael Nadal in the French Open final and Federer at Wimbledon.

But he insists his desire to

return to the top remains as strong as ever.

Djokovic, who has been drawn to play Italy's Fabio Fognini in the first round of the Olympics, concedes Federer is the favourite to win gold.

But he believes the schedule and unique atmosphere of the Olympics -- unlike the best of five set Grand Slams, the men's event will be played over three sets until the final -- means more shocks are likely.

"Roger, as a recent Wimbledon winner, stands probably the best chance to win the gold, because of his career, his success and his history. He is the number one favourite, then you have (Andy) Murray, myself and (Jo-Wilfried) Tsonga," Djokovic said.

"But the Olympics is different to other tennis events. You don't represent yourself. It is playing for your country and it feels like a team competition."

Like many of his rivals, Djokovic has opted to stay near Wimbledon rather than risk being stuck in traffic on the long journey from the Athletes' Village in east London to the All England Club on the other side of the capital.

But Djokovic, who won a bronze medal on his only other appearance at the Games in Beijing in 2008, is still a huge fan of the Olympic spirit.

"It is great to be alongside all the best athletes in the world. On Wednesday I came with all the tennis team from Wimbledon to pay a visit to the Athletes' Village," Djokovic said.

"We saw an incredible amount of athletes going around and it is just a different feeling. You can see so many excited faces and see that everyone has an extra motivation."

While Djokovic can't wait to get back on court for the first time since Wimbledon, before that he has the honour of carrying the Serbian flag at Friday's opening ceremony.

The 100-year-old Mrs. Diana Gould smiles, waves and holds the Olympic flame aloft as she completes her section of the torch relay in the London Borough of Barnet. Diana is still active at her grand age and recently took up yoga. Gould said the walk had not been too difficult. "The sun was a bit hot, but the walk was fine. Absolutely. I used to live in Hendon, so I knew where I was walking. Fine."



The Barcelona 1992 Games mark the beginning of the flamboyant opening torch ignitions that has been the Olympic norm since. An archer who competed in the Paralympic Games, Antonio Rebollo lit the flame by firing a burning arrow towards the cauldron. Well, actually he didn't, but it seemed he did. Rebollo was instructed to overshoot the cauldron for safety measures (although shooting a flaming arrow into the Barcelona night sky isn't probably that much safer), and the cauldron was gradually releasing fuel into the air, so when the flaming arrow passed over it, it ignited itself, tricking the eye.



LONDON (AFP) - Prince William and his wife Kate welcomed the Olympic flame to Buckingham Palace on Thursday, the penultimate day of its marathon journey that culminates at the London Games opening ceremony. The rising excitement was displayed at Buckingham Palace where thousands cheered on charity worker Wai-Ming Lee as he picked up the torch under the gaze of Prince William. Kate, William and his brother Prince Harry applauded as the torch was brought into the palace grounds. The flame was on a tour of some of central London's most famous landmarks before it finally makes its dramatic entrance at the Olympic Stadium today. The royals all wore Great Britain team t-shirts as the flame made its way to Hyde Park, where an expected crowd of 80,000 were set to greet the torch at a concert marking the start of the Games.



Joe Frazier and Russian Vadim Yemelyanov fight in a semifinal at the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964. Frazier went on to win gold.

SPORTS

US shooters say don't link us to Batman horror



US shooter Kim Rhode

LONDO (AFP) - US Olympic shooting competitors hope those watching the London Games do not link their firearm sports with the shooter who killed 12 people and wounded 58 others at an American theatre last week.

But the Olympic medallists said they could see how the horrific incident last week at a midnight screening of the new Batman movie "The Dark Knight Rises" might be generalized with their rifle, pistol and shotgun disciplines.

"It's going to affect the participants of our sport. It's going to have an affect on certain perceptions of America," said Vincent Hancock, a US Army soldier and defending

Olympic men's skeet champion. "We are one of the safest sports going. Our guys are safety-minded first. There are more injuries in ping pong than there are in shooting."

Bulgarian-born Emil Milev, a three-time Bulgarian Olympian who took a 1996 silver medal in rapid fire pistol and became a US citizen in 2009, said that anyone who would attack people in such a fashion would harm even without guns.

"It's not the gun that kills. It's the person that kills," Milev said. "For me, this is not a person. There's something wrong with his head. He

would find a way to do harm even if he can't get his hands on firearms.

"I don't think firearms use should struggle and be punished. I don't think firearm sports should be linked with that. Bulgaria is really strict on weapons and I have seen some crime with weapons."

Milev was worried when he saw news of the shooting in Europe because one of his Olympic teammates, Keith Sanderson, was going to see the movie at midnight, but not in the Denver suburb of Aurora where the attacks were made.

Kim Rhode, a women's trap and skeet shooter seeking a medal in her fifth consecutive Olympics, stressed the benefits from her years with guns, including her Olympic double trap gold at age 17 in 1996.

"Our sport is a sport. It's completely different from an isolated incident like this," she said. "It's very important to us our sport is not generalized. The lines get blurred between news and a sport that teaches discipline, respect, about the outdoors and teaches families and youth about the sport."

Formula One: Hamilton admits title challenge on the line

BUDAPEST (AFP) - Lewis Hamilton has admitted he cannot afford another non-points finish at this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix if he wants to stay in contention for this year's world championship.

The 27-year-old McLaren driver retired from last weekend's German Grand Prix after a puncture stole any chance he had at fighting for victory, while race-winner Spaniard Fernando Alonso of Ferrari extended his lead in the title race.

The 2008 champion, who wound up 19th at the European Grand Prix in Valencia in June, admitted last weekend's result had been another major blow to his title hopes and felt he could not afford to finish outside the points again.

"It was as big a dent as you could probably take, just as Valencia was," he said, "through a season I don't think there could be a bigger dent."

The Englishman did, however, take some respite from the improved performance of his car, demonstrated more



successfully perhaps by his McLaren team-mate and compatriot Jenson Button who wound up second after challenging pace-setter Alonso.

Hamilton said: "In terms of Jenson's result it was fantastic, but for me - looking at the pace I had even with the issues I had, my diff was quite badly damaged and my left rear corner destroyed plus my floor - knowing I had lost so much downforce and was still competitive was comforting."

Hamilton is currently fifth in the driver's standing with 92 points, 62 behind Alonso, while Button is further behind in seventh with 68 points.



EVIAN-LES-BAINS (AFP) - American Stacy Lewis shot a course record 63 in the opening round of the Evian Masters in France on Thursday, her scorching form matching the 30-degree heat. Runner-up behind Japan's Ai Miyazato last year, Lewis had a flawless nine-birdie round to lead by two shots from South Korea's Park Hee Young. Another South Korean, Lee Ilhee, was in third place on 66. Lewis had seven birdies in a row from the seventh and then added more at the 17th and 18th for the terrific nine-under-par score. Swede Helen Alfredsson, the only three-time winner, shot 63 on her way to victory in 2008, but Lewis's score counts as a new record as the course has been lengthened in preparation for the tournament becoming the fifth women's major next year. Park, who made her big breakthrough with a debut win on the LPGA Tour at the Titleholders Championship last season, also had a blistering birdie run. She made five birdies in a row from the fifth and had eight in all. Her only bogey was at the fourth and her great round came just days after she switched to a belly putter. But two big names struggled. Japan's Ai Miyazato, the defending champion, opened with a 71, while the best of the six French players was Karine Icher, who had five birdies on the front nine in a 68. South Korea's Choi Na Yeon, winner of the US Women's Open earlier this month, had a 75, and world number one Yani Tseng of Taiwan shot 76.



VIENNA (AFP) - Denmark's Thorbjorn Olesen stayed in command of the Austrian Open at Atzenbrugg near Vienna on Thursday's second day before storms forced a suspension of proceedings with some players still unfinished. Olesen managed to finish his 18, hitting a 68 after his sweet 64 of Wednesday, a round which matched the course record, to head the leader board at 12 under par, three shots ahead of nearest rival Thomas Levet of France. Next came England's Richard Bland at eight under and on seven under the trio of Dutchman Will Besseling, local hero Bernd Wiesberger and Oscar Floren of Sweden, all of whom were safely in the clubhouse before play was called to a halt. Olesen's co-leader from the first round, Spaniard Pablo Larrazabal, had a difficult day, struggling at two over par after nine holes for the round and six under for the championship before the weather forced him inside. Several other players were also still to finish when the bad weather struck including Oliver Wilson of England, six under for the competition after four, and Niclas Fasth of Sweden, who was five under after five. Defending champion Kenneth Ferrie of England completed his round but a one-over 73 after Wednesday's 70 left him 11 shots off the pace at one under for the competition. Organisers ruled that no more play was possible in the competition on Thursday, saying the action would resume today.

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Thirteen Italian clubs in dock over match-fixing



(AFP) - Thirteen clubs and 44 people including Juventus coach Antonio Conte and Italian international Leonardo Bonucci have been called to appear before a disciplinary commission of the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) on August 2 as part of an ongoing probe into a match-fixing scandal, the FIGC said on Thursday.

Juventus' Serie A winning coach Conte was implicated in the "Calcioscommesse" affair after one of his former players Filippo Carobbio accused him of complicity in a fixed match during his time as coach of Siena in the 2010/11 season.

Carobbio claims Conte knew of an agreement to draw a match against Novara, after which both teams were pro-

moted to Serie A.

Bonucci, who played in Euro 2012 despite suspicions hanging over him, is accused with having being involved with match fixing when he played for Bari during the 2009-2010 season.

Other players such as Italian defender Daniele Portanova of Bologna are in the same situation as Bonucci and risk a three-year suspension.

Italian internationals Simone Pepe and Marco Di Vaio are also being probed for alleged sporting fraud.

Promoted Serie A side Torino risk also starting the season with points penalty, while Serie B side Lecce risk being relegated to the third division.

Cameron hits back after barbed Romney comments



LONDON (AFP) - Prime Minister David Cameron insisted Thursday that Britain would deliver a memorable Olympics after US presidential hopeful Mitt Romney backtracked on barbed comments he made about the London Games.

With excitement mounting on the eve of the opening ceremony, Prince William, his wife Catherine and Prince Harry welcomed the torch to Buckingham Palace where tens of thousands of spectators had gathered.

But Romney, in London to attend today's opening of the Games, said the preparations had been "disconcerting", pointing to the failure of a private security contractor to provide the number of guards it had promised.

The Republican candidate also wondered aloud whether the British public would get behind the first Games to be held here since 1948.

On the eve of the Olympics, Cameron said security "matters more than anything else", and said he was convinced the Games would prove that Britain could stage a world-class event.

Cameron also said he was sure Britons would get behind the Games despite an economic downturn -- and took an apparent swipe at Romney's

past as head of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

"We are holding an Olympic Games in one of the busiest, most active, bustling cities anywhere in the world," Cameron said.

"Of course it's easier if you hold an Olympic Games in the middle of nowhere."

Cameron said he would take personal responsibility for the security of the Games, which are guarded by Britain's biggest ever peacetime force.

Britain has deployed an additional 4,700 troops in recent days to make up the shortfall in guards supplied by giant contractor G4S, taking the total military deployment to 18,200.

Romney told NBC News on Wednesday that "the stories about the private security firm not having enough people, the supposed strike of the immigration and customs officials - that obviously is not something which is encouraging".

It was "hard to know just how well it will turn out", he added.

But he struck a more diplomatic note after talks with Cameron later.

"I am very delighted with the prospects of a highly successful Olympic Games," Romney said.

The US team meanwhile

seemed happy with the conditions in London.

"Our experience has been nothing but positive," said Scott Blackmun, US Olympic Committee chief executive officer.

The rising excitement was displayed at Buckingham Palace where thousands cheered on charity worker Wai-Ming Lee as he picked up the torch under the gaze of Prince William.

Lee, 38, said the experience "was exhilarating and over too soon" and revealed that Prince William had joked to him "don't drop it".

Meanwhile, the Games was rocked by a doping scandal after Greece's world indoor high jump champion Dimitris Chondrokoukis was barred for failing a drugs test.

His coach and father Kyriakos Chondrokoukis said his son had tested positive for stanozolol, the steroid used by disgraced sprinter Ben Johnson at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

It adds to a humiliating start to the Olympics for Greece, which was forced on Wednesday to send home triple jumper Voula Papachristou for a racist tweet which poked fun at Africans living in the country.

Meanwhile, Games organisers tried to downplay a mix-up which saw North Korea's women football team walk off the pitch in an embarrassing start to the competitive action at the Games.

The International Olympic Committee apologised to the North Korean delegation after its players were shown on giant screens next to South Korea's flag, at their opener against Colombia on Wednesday at Hampden Park in Glasgow.

"This was an honest mistake, honestly made," Cameron said.

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